

J. W. STACEY, CARICOLOGIST

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That Mr. J. W. Stacey should have studied western carices was inevitable. His interest in this difficult group had been aroused years before by Charles Fay Wheeler when he was scarcely more than a lad in the Middle West and under Wheeler he made his first studies. For all the years that he had lived in San Francisco, systematic botany had been his chief interest outside of his business and the Glumiflorae had been more attractive to him than any other group. Hence, in 1933, when Miss Eastwood asked her long-time friend to determine for her a formidable accumulation of carices which K. K. Mackenzie had just declined to examine because of ill health, Mr. Stacey gladly consented. A concurrent reorganization of his business allowed him more time to himself and it was not long before he was deeply engrossed in a study of *Carex* in Western North America with ambitious plans for a revision of the genus in the United States west of the Rocky Mountains. Thus this



FIG. 1. J. W. Stacey, summer, 1942.

chain of events brought to Western Botany its only resident caricologist and centered his work at the California Academy of Sciences. For five years he pursued his systematic studies intensively but, due to a heart ailment which finally prevented the use of the microscope, he was unable to continue after 1939. Not only did Mr. Stacey contribute a great deal to our knowledge of western *Carex* but in this often-neglected genus he awakened a widespread interest among field workers that for many years will attest the influence of his vital and infectious enthusiasm.

Mr. Stacey was fundamentally interested in species and favored all means for detecting them, whether by morphology, cytology, or physiology. Although he himself relied chiefly on morphology in his taxonomic work, he welcomed data from the other fields of botany as a possible source of information for distinguishing closely related entities. With well-balanced judgment and keen discernment he made his analytical studies and he derived much pleasure from searching out the identity of some miserable but challenging fragment. He believed that species, when once properly circumscribed, exhibited at least one character (not

necessarily a "key-character") by which they could be recognized at some period in their life history. When once he had this exclusive character clearly in mind, he knew his species and could recognize it no matter how variable it might be. Henceforth for him the species was "fixed" and rarely could he be persuaded to accept for it any subdivision into varieties.

Although his work with *Carex* was seriously conceived and executed, nevertheless the time he spent in study was really his period of recreation and relaxation away from business. It pleased him to make a sociable time of it, discussing the plant he had before him, expounding some theory of relationship or distribution, criticizing or praising some treatment in the work of Mackenzie for whom he had great admiration. In the herbarium or on field trips he talked of little else but *Carex*, a source of annoyance to non-botanical acquaintances who sometimes accused him of being narrow-minded. One of his chief sources of delight in conversation was to catch up unwary persons by exposing some scientific fallacy or rhetorical exaggeration in their speech. If a verbal tilt developed, he was never acrimonious nor argumentative, always allowing his adversary the satisfaction of justifying his statement; but from the twinkle in Mr. Stacey's eye one knew who had won, who had had fun. To fellow botanists he was generous of his means and knowledge but only so long as he felt he was being accorded an honest and true return in science and friendship.

As an amateur botanist interested in the general systematic botany of western vascular plants Mr. Stacey was one of the keenest and best-informed. Very few are the professional botanists who could have surpassed him in a knowledge of plants as they grow, a knowledge gained from methodical study while on recreational strolls and trips over a period of many years. In an attempt to organize the taxonomic data obtained on these outings, he prepared lists of plants for each of the counties bordering San Francisco Bay which are more complete than anything of which I know and which contain many entries indicative of his keen power of observation and his scholarly discernment.

The fullest scientific use of these lists cannot be realized unfortunately because only the exceptional entry is represented by a herbarium specimen for reference. Although a brilliant all-around field naturalist, Mr. Stacey was in no sense of the word a botanical collector. For him it was enough to search out the rarest plants where they grew, leaving to amateur collectors or professional botanists the task of preserving scientific herbarium records. A few specimens of his collecting will be found in the herbarium of the California Academy of Sciences but they are frequently represented by mere scraps or fragments sent to Miss Eastwood for determination or verification. After he seriously undertook the study of western carices, he made a real effort to

try to collect; but his almost-untouched stock of printed labels shows that his own activity as a collector fell far short of his intentions. How well I remember the collecting trips that he and I made to such rich localities as the *Ledum* swamp on the road to Point Reyes or to the Pitkin marsh in Sonoma County: while Mr. Stacey would freely wander about intent on plants in general and *Carex* in particular, I would spend most of my time digging and picking, collecting and pressing, specimens! The superb research collection of West American *Carex* in the herbarium of the California Academy of Sciences, however, proves that one need not be a collector to build a collection.

The published results of Mr. Stacey's research in *Carex* appeared chiefly as a series of "Notes on *Carex*" in Leaflets of Western Botany, volumes 1 and 2, from November, 1934, to February, 1939. There were fifteen contributions in this series which include descriptions of seven new species besides extended distributional data and notes on the identity of various critical species. His only other botanical writings of which I know are "Notes on some plant introductions, mostly Californian" (Leaflet West. Bot. 1: 69-71. 1933), and his treatment of the genus *Carex* in Kearney and Peebles Flowering Plants and Ferns of Arizona (U. S. Dept. Agric. Miscell. Publ. no. 423, pp. 168-175. 1942). A notice of Mr. Stacey's death appeared in Science (n. ser. 98: 464. 1943) and a brief obituary was published in Academy News Letter no. 48 (December, 1943).

When no longer able to give his serious attention to *Carex*, Mr. Stacey turned to another field of natural science and devoted his time and interest to ornithology. To this study he brought the same enthusiasm, the same critical discernment, which characterized his work in botany. Concerning his ornithological activity, the following was written in Academy News Letter no. 48: "In two or three years he had developed a field knowledge of birds that was surprising even to veteran observers. The new interest he had taken up at sixty-eight he pursued with the same intensity and thoroughness that had characterized all of his activities throughout his life; and after his death his executors found among his papers literally almost half a bushel of carefully written manuscript notes on birds."

John William Stacey was born in Galesburg, Michigan, on February 26, 1871, and died in San Francisco, California, October 16, 1943. His wife, the former Mrs. Florence Ward Waite whom he married in St. Louis shortly before coming to California, survives him. He attended the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, taking courses in medicine and botany, and at least during one summer did botanical field work with C. F. Wheeler. After completing his medical course, he went to the Bellevue Hospital as an interne, but instead of completing his work and practicing, he specialized in the further study of drugs and took up editorial

work for medical publications. He came to San Francisco in 1914 where, shortly after, he became connected with the book department of The Emporium, first as head of the medical book department and later as head of the entire book department. In 1923 he founded the business firm of J. W. Stacey, Inc., which soon attained importance as an institution in medical and scientific circles throughout Western America. Evidence of the high esteem in which Mr. Stacey's store is held is observed in the fact that medical students are urged by their instructors to browse through his stock of books to acquaint themselves with the most recent literature of their field.

Although Mr. Stacey was always a scientist at heart, with particular interests in systematic botany and ornithology, these fields of scientific endeavor did not attract him professionally. His success in the business world was due in no small degree to his deep attachment to science, for it was the rare combination of his thoroughly scientific background, his naturally keen business ability, and his happy and animated personality that accounted for a career that was eminently successful and in some respects unique.

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DERMATITIS AND PHOTSENSITIZATION PRODUCED BY PTELEA ANGUSTIFOLIA

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In the summer of 1942 and again in 1943 workmen in Highland Park, Rochester, New York, received a severe dermatitis believed to have been caused by contact with the leaves of *Ptelea angustifolia* Benth. (*P. lutescens* Greene), a member of the Rutaceae. Other plants in this family, *Dictamnus albus* L. and *Ruta graveolens* L. are known to cause a dermatitis in susceptible individuals but no records could be found of dermatitis caused by any species of *Ptelea*. This note is a report of some tests made by us which demonstrate that *Ptelea angustifolia*, a native shrub of the Southwestern United States, also may cause a severe dermatitis in some individuals.

The fresh material used in these tests was kindly supplied by Mr. R. H. Horsey, from introduced shrubs growing in Highland Park. We are indebted to Dr. Joseph N. Frost of Ithaca for his interest in the tests, for advice, and for the treatment of some of the more severe cases of dermatitis in two of the subjects.

Eight persons, all volunteers, were used as subjects in the